

Quick facts about the latest Mississippi Highway Patrol cadet class  
– “Class 59” – that graduates Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

- is the third MHP class to graduate in Governor Barbour’s first term (Class 58 - December 2006 - 50 graduates; Class 57 - March 2006 – 43 graduates)

- is the fourth largest in the history of MHP with 69 graduates

- will bring the total number of sworn troopers to 629, the largest number in the history of MHP (figure does not include MBN agents)

- in Governor Barbour’s first term, there have been nearly as many troopers added to MHP as were added in the past decade.

- first female graduate since class of December 2003)

- a 55-year-old male (oldest graduate in MHP history)

- 23 graduates with prior law enforcement experience

- had 121 “invited” cadets/trooper candidates,

- began July 8 and continued for 21 weeks.

Other classes in the past decade:

Class 56 - December 2003 - 41 graduates

Class 55 - December 2000 - 57 graduates

Class 54 - October 1999 - 27 graduates

Class 53 - February 1999 - 33 graduates

Class 52 - February 1997 - 29 graduates

DRAFT remarks  
Trooper School graduation  
Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Thank you and welcome.

I appreciate all of you family members and friends who are here with these cadets because it is absolutely fitting and proper that you be here to salute them and to congratulate them on this tremendous accomplishment.

I am very pleased that these 69 law enforcement professionals are the third cadet class to graduate during my first term - our Highway Patrol has been short-handed even as the demand for their public safety services has increased.

State law enforcement - whether it's the Bureau of Narcotics, the Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security; all of these things we have tried to strengthen. Why?

Let's never forget that the reason government came into being in the world thousands of years ago was to protect the public. It's the reason we have a government.

When we grew from families to clans to tribes to villages to nation-states, always the organizing function was to protect the public. For generations in America, but for millennia people in the civilized world have relied on men and women like these cadets today who will be state troopers in a few minutes. We must not ever forget that.

All of what we do as a government, whether it's education or economic development or transportation, none of that can happen without public safety.

My family, your family, every family relies on these people. We rely on them so totally we sometimes take them for granted.

We don't think about the risks they take. We don't think about the hours they work. We don't think about the fact that we are safe because they are willing to not be safe in order to protect us.

We ought to think about that today. It ought to be part of the celebration for everybody who's sitting in this part of the room, or standing in the back that's not in uniform, for every one of us.

We depend on these people.

There's hardly anybody sitting here in these uniforms who could not make more money doing something else - you better believe that. Every now and again, we have an officer who has the chance to leave, for whatever reason, and always they go and make more money.

But they do this public safety job out of conviction and commitment. And they believe in it, and that's why they are so good. That's why they set the standard for law enforcement in our state and a lot of other states.

So, obviously, we are proud of them. You ought to be proud of whomever it is in this room that you came to see today - and I know that you are.

But I want to talk to you about another part of this that I direct to the cadets and to the men and women who lead them and will work with them.

The last 21 weeks has been, politely put, rugged. These folks have been through as tough training as people can be put through. They have been ridden hard. They've been run down. They have been pushed to the brink, and it shouldn't be surprising that the class started with 121 members.

Because the training is so tough, physically and intellectually and emotionally, a large percentage don't finish, they don't make it, which is all the more tribute to those who do.

Physical ability is critical to them doing their jobs. It's critical to their fighting crime. It's critical to working the hours they have to work.

Many of the people in this room remember the night before Hurricane Katrina hit, and the long, tough days afterwards. But on that night, 120 highway patrolmen and narcotics agents and investigators and 800 National Guardsmen went down into harm's way.

I know many of their stories because, providentially, Marsha went with them. The kind of physical training that they had allowed these men and women to work for days without stopping - without a bed to sleep in, catching a few winks in the back seat of a car -

because the people needed them, because there was no help and they knew they were the first responders who were going to do the search and rescue, along with the local law enforcement and the other first responders.

They were physically up to it. The physical part is very important. The training that they have had with weapons, investigation and the other arts and sciences of law enforcement, have been very, very rigorous and I know they have learned a lot.

They shoot and they shoot well. Because if you don't shoot well, you don't make the grade. If you don't shoot well, somebody's life might be lost because you can't shoot well. That training is critical and that capacity is critical.

In our state, we have a state motto; it also happens to be the motto of the Mississippi Highway Patrol: “Virtute et armis”; it means by valor and arms. It’s an old Latin phrase and for these highway patrolmen, it’s the right motto. It refers to courage, willingness to put their lives on the line, physical strength, and ability to use their weapons and the other equipment of their profession to protect us.

But, I would suggest to you, another part of that motto is even more important. In Latin, the word that we translated into virtue, the word “virtute,” is normally translated in our state as valor, courage; but it can also be translated as character.

By character we serve, and I would say to you character and virtue are very important to the people of Mississippi. Your inner goodness, your character, will shine through in many ways and at many times; sometimes it will be more important to your service than courage or strength.



Many a night, in the middle of the night, you may arrest somebody or stop to help somebody out on a lonely road in the middle of nowhere. We can't just send anybody out to do that. Yes, you have to be trained, you have to know how to use the equipment, you have got to know how to use the communications to get help; but you've also got to have the virtue that we can trust you, that we can trust you with our families, with our children.

What is so powerful to me about this organization, in fact all of the men and women of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, is that we can trust them, their reputation is sterling, their history sparkles.

You are good men and women who will do good things for the people of Mississippi; who are not just committed and courageous, but who have good character; who are virtuous; and I celebrate that for you and for those who have traveled this path before you in this organization.

God bless you and the service you will give the citizens of this state.

Thank you.